

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 5 1. A method for generating a test plan for a quality control procedure, the test plan having a hierarchical structure comprising:
- 10 a first top level identifying the test plan;  
a first intermediate level comprising at least a test report file of the test plan; and  
a first lower level comprising at least a test item file for each test report file, each test item file comprising testing steps for performing a test of an item;
- 15 wherein the first top level is used to access the associated test report files of the test plan, and each test report file is used to access the associated test item files;
- the method comprising:
- 20 providing a template archive, the template archive comprising at least a template, each template having a hierarchical structure comprising:
- 25 a second top level for identifying the template;  
a second intermediate level for identifying at least a sub-process of the template; and  
a second lower level comprising at least a template item file for each sub-process, each template item file comprising testing steps for performing a test of an item;
- 30 wherein the second top level is used to access the associated sub-processes of the template, and each sub-process is used to access the associated

template item files;

providing a selection system, the selection system enabling a user to select a template from the template archive, select a sub-process from the template, and  
5 select a template item file from the sub-process; and providing a conversion system that converts the selected template, sub-process, and template item file into a corresponding test plan;

wherein the user uses the selection system to create a  
10 hierarchical selection list by selecting a template, at least a sub-process of the template, and at least a template item file for each selected sub-process, and the conversion system creates a product test plan according to the selection list, the product test plan having a corresponding test report file  
15 for each selected sub-process, and a corresponding test item file for each selected template item file, the hierarchical structure of the product test plan conforming to the hierarchical structure of the selection list.

20 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the hierarchical structure of the product test plan is a tree structure.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the conversion system copies the contents of each selected template item file to create  
25 the test item files of the product test plan.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the conversion system creates a test report file for each selected sub-process.

30 5. The method of claim 4 wherein the conversion system places at least a link in the test report file, each link being used to access a test item file.

6. A system for generating a test plan for a quality control procedure, the test plan having a hierarchical structure comprising:

- 5       a first top level identifying the test plan;
- a first intermediate level comprising at least a test report file of the test plan; and
- a first lower level comprising at least a test item file for each test report file, each test item file
- 10       comprising testing steps for performing a test of an item;

wherein the first top level is used to reference the associated test report files of the test plan, and each test report file is used to reference the associated

- 15       test item files;

the system comprising:

- a template archive, the template archive comprising at least a template, each template having a hierarchical structure comprising:
- 20       a second top level for identifying the template;
- a second intermediate level for identifying at least a sub-process of the template; and
- a second lower level comprising at least a template item file for each sub-process, each template item
- 25       file comprising testing steps for performing a test of an item;
- wherein the second top level is used to reference the associated sub-processes of the template, and each sub-process is used to reference the associated
- 30       template item files;
- a selection system, the selection system enabling a user to select a template from the template archive, select

- a sub-process from the template, and select a template item file from the sub-process; and  
a conversion system that converts the selected template, sub-process, and template item file into a  
5 corresponding test plan;
- wherein the user uses the selection system to create a hierarchical selection list by selecting a template, at least a sub-process of the template, and at least a template item file for each selected sub-process, and the conversion system  
10 creates a product test plan according to the selection list, the product test plan having a corresponding test report file for each selected sub-process, and a corresponding test item file for each selected template item file, the hierarchical structure of the product test plan conforming to the  
15 hierarchical structure of the selection list.
7. The system of claim 6 wherein the template archive is stored on a computer system.
- 20 8. The system of claim 7 wherein the hierarchical structure of the product test plan is a tree structure.
9. The system of claim 8 wherein the conversion system copies the contents of each selected template item file to create  
25 the test item files of the product test plan.
10. The system of claim 7 wherein the conversion system creates a test report file for each selected sub-process.
- 30 11. The system of claim 10 wherein the conversion system places at least a link in the test report file, each link being used to access a test item file.

12. The system of claim 11 further comprising a viewing system that enables the user to view at least a test report file or at least a test item file.

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13. The system of claim 12 wherein when the user views a test report file, the links in the test report file are presented as hyperlinks, and each hyperlink enables the user to instruct the viewer to present the associated test item file.

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14. The system of claim 7 further comprising a printing system that enables the user to print at least a test report file or at least a test item file.